English Language Arts Grade 6 Assessment

Department of Education

News Releases

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The literacy abilities of students in Grade 6 are good, but there is room for improvement. That is the conclusion of a new assessment of Nova Scotia Grade 6 students released by Education Minister Jane Purves.

The results of the assessment indicate that most students did comparatively well in understanding information texts and thinking critically about media texts. However, many students did not perform as well in their interpretations of literary texts such as short stories and poetry.

"Our new curriculum focuses on literacy, and measuring student progress is crucial to making improvements in that area," said Ms. Purves. "While the results are consistent with those of previous tests, there is clearly some room for improvement."

The five-part assessment is the first to measure student progress under the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts curriculum, which identifies the development of literacy as a priority. The curriculum was first used across the region in 1997-98 and the assessment was administered in the spring of 1999.

The assessment requires Grade 6 students to read and interpret different types of written material and write personal and critical responses. Teachers and assessment officials determined an expected level of performance for each task.

Overall results include:
- Interpreting informational text: mean score was 7.63 out of 10.
- Responding critically to a media text: 77 per cent of student writing was at the expected level.
- Creating a story board in response to a short story: 58 per cent of student response was at the expected level.
- Responding personally to a poem: 47 per cent of student response was at the expected level.
- Crafting a personal narrative: 71 per cent of student writing was at the expected level.

"This assessment shows us both where we are, and where we need to go, to improve literacy in our children," said Ms. Purves. "We will work with school boards to get better results in the future."

The Department of Education analyses the results, looking for ways to improve student learning at the elementary level. School boards and schools use them in reviewing curricular expectations;

promoting effective classroom practices; and identifying directions for professional development.

The second round of the assessments will be administered in elementary schools across the province this spring.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

Grade 6 students in Nova Scotia did well in recent literacy tests, but there's room for improvement.

That's the conclusion of a new assessment released today by Education Minister Jane Purves.

Most students did well in understanding information texts and thinking critically about media texts.

However, many didn't do as well in interpreting literary texts, such as short stories and poetry.

Purves says the results are similar to those of previous tests.

She says while the curriculum focuses on literacy, there is clearly room for improvement.

The five-part assessment was conducted in spring 1999 in elementary schools across the province.

A second round will be conducted this spring.

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